

VZCZCXRO6772

PP RUEHAO RUEHCD RUEHGA RUEHGD RUEHGR RUEHHA RUEHHO RUEHMC RUEHNG  
RUEHNL RUEHQU RUEHRD RUEHRG RUEHRS RUEHTM RUEHVC  
DE RUEHDG #0760 1380245  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 170245Z MAY 08  
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0734  
INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUMISTA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY

UNCLAS SANTO DOMINGO 000760

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ECON](#) [DR](#)

SUBJECT: DOMINICAN ELECTION: FIRST RESULTS INDICATE  
FERNANDEZ VICTORY

REF: SANTO DOMINGO 0751 (ELECTION SCENESETTER)

First Bulletin  
-----

¶1. The Central Election Board (JCE) released its "First Bulletin" at approximately 10:15 p.m., with the following results:

- Leonel Fernandez, Dominican Liberation Party (PLD), 53 percent
- Miguel Vargas Maldonado, Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), 41 percent
- Amable Aristy Castro, Reformista Party (PRSC), 5 percent
- All other candidates, less than one percent

¶2. These results are based on a representative sample of 10.25 percent. Based on the votes received by Fernandez and the sample size of these preliminary results, it is very likely that the final results -- when released -- will show that Fernandez has been re-elected for the 2008-2012 term. The constitution requires that a candidate reach the 50 percent threshold in order to win in the first round. The First Bulletin results are corroborated by the quick count of the respected local NGO Participacion Ciudadana. According to a U.S. officer, that quick count is within decimal points of the JCE's numbers.

¶3. It is important to note that Vargas has not yet conceded; the First Bulletin was only recently released.

Election Day  
-----

¶4. Generally, voting countrywide went smoothly. There were sporadic reports of long lines at some polling places. Nearly all polling places opened on time at 6:00 a.m. and closed on time at 6:00 p.m.

¶5. The local election observation NGO Participacion Ciudadana reported the following:

- Two reports of violence this morning: In the Cristo Rey section of Santo Domingo, there was an exchange of gunfire resulting in two wounded. In Bonao, a local PLD leader was shot and wounded by the bodyguard of a PRD deputy. This is a moderate level of violence for the Dominican Republic.
- Numerous reports of the vote-buying, which in this country consists of the "buying" of cedula (identity cards) by political party operatives (in order to discourage voting by opponents).
- 13 people who attempted to vote more than once were turned away from election stations.

¶6. Embassy Defense Attache reports that national election police (military units plus national police mustered to

support election day security efforts) are closely monitoring national events and report that the situation is calm countrywide. They stand ready to respond quickly to any situation of civil unrest.

¶7. At 3:15 p.m., there was a live report of the arrest of Gen. Zorrilla Ozuna (Ret.), who is a supporter of the PRD, who had announced at midweek that he would be "out in the streets" on election day "to defend the vote of the PRD." The armed forces later clarified that the general had not been arrested, but had been "invited to talk" with the military, who explained to him that he was not allowed to enter polling places without proper credentials, nor could he be accompanied by other retired military similarly lacking proper credentials.

¶8. Ambassador Fannin was interviewed on live TV at 2:00 p.m. He expressed support for the many hard working people making this election possible and praised this day of "democracy in action" in the Dominican Republic, and the work of the JCE.

(U) Please visit us at  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/santodomingo/>  
FANNIN